DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 202 631 RC 012 713

AUTHOR Ostertag, Bruce Andrew
TITLE Navajo Learning Disabled Reading Practices and Procedures.
SPONS AGENCY Northern Arizona Univ., Flagstaff. Coll. of Education.
PUB DATE 15 Jun 81
NOTE 26p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indians; Elementary Education; *Learning Disabilities; Needs Assessment; Public Schools; Questionnaires; Reading Diagnosis; Reading Difficulties; *Reading Instruction; Reading Teachers; *Remedial Reading; Special Education; Teacher Certification; Teacher Education; *Teacher Responsibility; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools; *Navajo (Nation)

ABSTRACT

A survey of special educators who taught elementary learning disabled (LD) Navajo students in 15 public and 28 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools sampled practices and procedures in current use including the role responsibility for teaching reading, reading assessment instruments, commonly used reading approaches, reading skills stressed, and commonly used reading materials. Teachers also responded to questions regarding their educational and teaching experiences. Results of the study indicated: (1) there were no significant differences between public and BIA-affiliated schools; (2) at least half of the teachers surveyed had a major reading responsibility for their LD students; and (3) a majority of the respondents believed more reading coursework should be required for special education credentialling. The data reflected the "state of the art" on the Navajo Nation; revealed currently used reading assessment instruments, approaches, skills, materials, and teacher and educational experiences; and indicated teacher dissatisfaction with existing formal devices. The collected data could be used for reference purposes by teachers desiring additional information regarding reading approaches, skills and materials for Navajo students. An appendix contains a sample questionnaire and frequency responses. (CM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED202631

NAVAJO LEARNING DISABLED READING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Bruce Andrew Ostertag
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, Arizona
June 15, 1981

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: RC EC
In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view. CS

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Bruce A. Ostertag, Ed.D.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

1234567890 JUN 1981 ERIC/CRESS RECEIVED

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Funding was provided through the Northern Arizona University College of Education, Associate Dean Jim R. Davis.

RC012713

NAVAJO LEARNING DISABLED
READING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

With the passage of Public Law 94-142 (P.L. 94-142), most states have mandated compatible legislation which has spurred the rapid development of special education programs. Though the Navajo nation has no one document governing special education, the schools on the nation generally follow Bureau of Indian Affairs or their home state rules and regulations.

Reading instruction has always been a major emphasis area of a learning disability (LD) program. As such, it was and is expected that LD teachers would provide the primary instruction in reading for their special students. This demands a great degree of reading expertise on the part of LD teachers. Further, teaching on the Navajo nation often finds the teacher instructing many youngsters whose primary language is other than English. This factor requires an LD teacher to also have competence in instructing English-as-a-second language (ESL) special students who require reading in their program.

In an effort to determine the "state of the Art," a survey of special educators who teach elementary LD Navajo students was conducted. The survey sampled five practices and procedures including (1) the role responsibility for teaching reading, (2) reading assessment instruments, (3) commonly used reading approaches, (4) reading skills stressed, and (5) commonly used reading materials. Teachers also

responded to questions regarding their educational and teaching experiences.

METHOD

A questionnaire assessing reading practices and procedures was developed and field tested through personal interviews with ten elementary LD teachers from throughout the Navajo nation. A stratified random selection process, utilizing the Directory of Services for the Navajo Handicapped (1980), served as the basis for identification of subjects. Their responses indicated a clear understanding of the questions so no item modifications were made.

Upon confirmation of the questionnaire clarity, questionnaires were mailed to seventy-six schools located on the Navajo Nation. The mailings occured during March and April of 1981.

RESULTS

Forty-three elementary schools out of a total of fifty-three schools participated in this study for a return of 81 percent. Out of these forty-three schools, five elementary schools indicated that they did not have a special program for LD students; therefore, the tabulations of the data are based upon thirty-eight responses. In all, fifteen elementary schools were public, and twenty-eight Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) run or contracted.

Table 1. Student populations of Navajo Nation elementary schools as indicated by their responding special educators.

Student Populations of Elementary Schools	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Below 50	1	13.2
51-150	5	10.5
151-200	4	13.2
201-250	5	21.1
251-300	8	5.3
301-400	2	18.4
401-500	6	2.6
Total	38	100.0

Role Responsibility for Teaching Reading.

Demographic data regarding elementary school size and the student population per L.D. program were collected and analyzed. This data is presented in Table 1 and Table 2. School and program size did not affect reading practices and procedures. This also held true whether the elementary school was public

Table 2. Population of Navajo Nation learning disabled students per elementary school program.

L.D. Program Student Populations	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
5 or less	3	7.9
6 - 10	5	13.2
11 - 15	9	23.7
16 - 20	11	28.9
21 - 25	7	18.4
over 26	3	7.9
TOTAL	38	100.0

or BIA contracted. Essentially, 50 percent of the responding special educators indicated that they were mainly responsible for instructing their L.D. students in reading.

Table 3. Special Educator's role in the reading instruction of the Navajo LD elementary student.

Mainly Responsible for Reading Instruction	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Yes	19	50.0
No	19	50.0
TOTAL	38	100.0

In conjunction with this responsibility approximately 48 percent of the respondents indicated that they provided formal remedial reading programs for their Navajo LD students. Almost 40 percent of the remaining respondents provided specific tutoring of reading skill needs for their students.

Table 4. Function of special educators in relationship to reading and their Navajo LD elementary students.

Function	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Provide Formal Remedial Reading	18	47.4
Provide Specific Tutoring for Reading Skills Needs	15	39.5
Consultant to Remedial Reading Specialist	3	7.9
Direct Peer Tutoring	0	0.0
No response	2	5.3
TOTAL	38	100.0

Reading Assessment Instruments. The assessment instruments were grouped into three categories: (1) general survey tests, (2) diagnostic reading batteries, and (3) diagnostic reading tests of specific skills. None of the general survey tests or diagnostic tests of specific skills proved to be overwhelmingly popular. The most commonly used tests were

diagnostic reading batteries including the Wide Range Achievement test; the Peabody Individual Achievement Test: Reading Subtests; the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, and the Brigance Diagnostic Test of Basic Skills. Please refer to Table 5 or a summary of the various tests and responses. A majority of respondents administered both formal and informal reading tests. Table 6 illustrates these responses.

Table 5. Use of reading assessment instruments by teachers of Navajo LD elementary students.

Reading Test	Frequency of Respondents
General Survey Tests:	
Gates-McGinitie Reading Test	4
Metropolitan Achievement Test	1
Nelson Silent Reading Test	0
SRA Achievement Series: Reading	1
Other	0
Diagnostic Reading Test Batteries:	
Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty	1
Gates-McKillop Reading Diagnostic Test	0
Peabody Individual Achievement Test: Reading subsections	18
Spache Diagnostic Reading Scales	0
Wide Range Achievement Test: Reading	22
Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery: Reading Subsection	2
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test	13[b]
Other	11
Diagnostic Reading Tests of Specific Skills:	
Botel Reading Inventory	3
Doren Diagnostic Test of Word Recognition	2
Fry's Phonic Criterion Test	0
Gray Oral Reading Test	3
Other	0

a-based upon thirty-eight respondents. b- Eleven respondents indicated they use the Brigance Diagnostic Test of Basic Skills

Table 6. Reading Assessments administered by the special educator of Navajo LD elementary students.

Reading Assessments Administered	Formal Reading Tests		Informal Reading Tests	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	78.9	32	84.2
No	8	21.1	6	15.8
TOTAL	38	100.0	38	100.0

Reading Approaches. Teachers indicated the basic reading approach they used with their Navajo LD students. The most used approaches were Individualized Reading and Multi-sensory program. These two approaches accounted for nearly 50 percent of all the reading programs currently being used. Please see Table 7 for summary of the approaches.

Table 7. Reading approaches of Special Educators who instruct Navajo LD elementary school students.

Rank Order of Reading Approaches	Frequency	Percentage
Individualized	11	28.9
Multi-sensory	8	21.0
Language Experience	6	15.7
Phonics	5	13.2
Programmed Instruction	2	5.3
Linguistics	2	5.3
Basals	2	5.3
Sight Word Method	2	5.3
TOTAL	38	100.0

Skills Stressed. The question of reading skills stressed in the LD program was addressed by asking respondents to select the three highest priority skills the teach. Two reading skills, Comprehension and Word Recognition, were selected with a much greater frequency than any other skill. Table 8 gives the specific data on the selections.

Table 8. Three highest priority reading skills taught by teachers of Navajo LD elementary students.

Reading Related Skill[a]	Frequency of Respondents[b]	Percent
Comprehension	31	81.6
Word Recognition	29	76.3
Listening Skills	17	44.7
Word Meaning	11	28.9
Survival Reading	9	23.7
Concept Development	8	21.1
Study Skills	4	10.5
Reading Rate	2	5.3

a - Each teacher was allowed to select their three top priority reading skills.

b- A total of thirty-eight special educators responded.

Reading Materials. Teachers were asked to identify the reading materials they used with elementary L.D. students. Respondents could respond to all or none of the following nine categories of materials: (1) basal reading series; (2) series books; (3) reading kits; (4) reading workbook; (5) reading games; (6) audiovisual products and aids (7) reading machines; (8) magazines and newspapers; and

(9) reference materials. The two most frequently used reading materials were Reading Games and Series Books.

Table 9. Reading Materials used by special educators of Navajo LD elementary students.

Reading Material	Frequency of Respondents [a]	Percent
Reading Games	30	78.9
Series Books	27	71.1
Audio-Visual Aids/Products	24	63.2
Basal Reader Series	21	55.3
Reading Kits	19	50.0
Magazines/Newspapers	18	47.4
Reading Workbooks	16	42.1
Reading Machines	3	7.9
Dictionaries, Encyclopedias	19	50.0

a - Based upon thirty-eight respondents.

Educational and Teaching Experiences. The questionnaire asked the respondents to identify their classroom experiences, their educational backgrounds, their endorsements, and two related opinions: who was best able to teach the Navajo L.D. student to read and if their schools were meeting the needs of their L.D. students.

As shown by Table 10, most respondents have taught special education for more than three years and have some experience as general educators. The majority (81 percent) have also achieved a B.S. or higher college degree. Please see Table 11 for this data.

Table 10. Teaching experience of Special Educators who instruct Navajo LD elementary school students.

Years teaching Experience	Frequency of Respondents In Special Education	Frequency of Respondents In General	Percent In Special Education	Percent In General
Less than one	9	12	23.7	31.6
1 - 3	9	16	23.7	42.1
3.1 - 5	5	5	13.2	13.2
5.1 - 7	8	3	21.1	7.9
7.1 - 9	4	0	10.5	0.0
More than nine	3	2	7.9	5.3
TOTAL	38	38	100.0	100.0

Table 11. Highest College degree held by special educators of Navajo L.D. student.

College Degree	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
A.A.	0	0.0
B.A.	7	18.4
B.S.	21	55.3
M.A.	9	23.7
Ed.S.	1	2.6
Doctorate	0	0.0

a- based upon thirty-eight respondents

Out of thirty-eight respondents, one special educator has obtained a reading endorsement. When asked whether they believed all special educators should hold a reading endorsement in addition to their special education credential, only about one-third (37) percent) believed this should be required. However, 71 percent responded by stating more reading coursework should be required for special education certification. Table 12 demonstrates these results.

Table 12. Opinions of special educators regarding reading endorsement and coursework.

Status and Opinion[a]	Yes Frequency	Yes Percent	No Frequency	No Percent
Reading Endorsement Currently Held?	1	2.6	37	97.4
Should Teachers of L.D. Hold a Reading Endorsement?	14	36.8	24	63.2
Should More Reading Coursework be Required for Special Education Certification	27	71.1	11	28.9

a - Based upon thirty-eight responses.

When asked whom they regarded as the best reading instructor for their Navajo LD students, the respondents indicated two preferences: 40 percent favored a reading specialist and 37 percent opted for a team approach. Only 21 percent felt that a special teacher was best able to teach reading to L.D. students (Table 13).

Table 13. Special Educator response regarding best instructor(s) to teach reading to Navajo LD elementary students.

Instructor(s)	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Reading Specialist	15	39.5
Team Approach	14	36.8
Special Educator	8	21.1
Bilingual/ESL Educator	1	2.6
Peer-Tutor	0	0.0
Adult-Tutor	0	0.0
Parents	0	0.0
TOTAL	38	100.0

However, as previously shown, 50 percent of the responding special educators were responsible for teaching reading to their students. Table 14 confirms this by statistically demonstrating less than 12 percent of Navajo L.D. students are in a remedial reading program.

Lastly, the responding special educators were asked if they believed their elementary schools were meeting the needs of their Navajo L.D. students. Table 15 reveals that about one-half of the respondents felt their schools were successfully teaching their L.D. students.

Table 14. Navajo LD students currently enrolled in a remedial reading program instructed by a reading specialist.

LD Navajo Students	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Number of L.D. Students in Remedial Reading program	61	11.6
Number of L.D. Students not in Remedial Reading Program	463	88.4
TOTAL	524	100.0

Table 15. Opinion of special educators regarding their elementary school meeting the needs of Navajo LD students.

School Meeting Needs	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Yes	20	52.6
No	18	47.4
TOTAL	38	100.0

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate several factors. Firstly, that in the realm of reading instruction for Navajo L.D. elementary students, there is no significant differences between public or BIA-affiliated schools. This is true at the .05 significance level as measured using chi-square statistics. Secondly, at least half of the teachers surveyed have a major reading responsibility for their L.D. students. Thirdly, a majority of the respondents believe more reading coursework should be required for special education credentialling.

The data collected reflects the "State of the Art" on the Navajo nation. In addition to the teaching responsibilities discussed above, the data reveals currently used reading assessment instruments, approaches, skills, materials, teacher and educational expereinces. The data on assessment instruments indicates dissatisfication with existing formal devices. If this reflects a Navajo nation concensus, a crucial need exists in this area and research efforts should be directed toward it. The majority of the data can be used for reference purposes; it mirrors accrued knowledge which may be beneficial to L.D. teachers desiring additional information regarding reading approaches, skills and materials for Navajo students.

References

Arizona Department of Education. 1980-81 Arizona Educational Directory. Phoenix, Arizona.: Fall, 1980

Federal Register. Education of Handicapped Children, Pt. II Washington, D.C.: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, August 23, 1977.

Ferguson, G. Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education. New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1976.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

AND FREQUENCY RESPONSES

READING AND THE NAVAJO

NATION'S LEARNING DISABLED

1. School Name _____

2. School Level

   1. 38 Elementary 2. ____Jr. High. 3. ____High School

   4. ____ Other (Please describe) _____

3. Type of School

   1. _____Private 2. 15 Public 3. ____Church 4. 23 BIA

   5. _____Other (Please describe) _____

4. School Population

   1. 5 Below 50 students

   2. 4 51 - 150 students

   3. 5 151 - 200 students

   4. 8 201 - 250 students

   5. 2 251 - 300 students

   6. 7 301-400 students

   7. 6 401 - 500 students

   8. 1 over 501 students

5. How many Learning Disabled (LD) students are in your class?

   1. 3 1 - 5 students

   2. 5 6 - 10 students

   3. 9 11 - 15 students

   4. 11 16 - 20 students

   5. 7 21 - 25 students

   6. 3 26 - 30 students

   7. 0 over 31 students

6. How many years have you taught special education?

1. 9 First year teaching 2. 9 1 - 3 years
3. 5 3.1 - 5 years 4. 8 5.1 - 7 years 5. 4 7.1 - 9 years 6. 3 Over 9 years

7. How many years have you taught regular/general education?

1. 16 1 - 3 years 2. 5 3.1 - 5 years 3. 3 5.1 - 7 years 4. 0 7.1 - 9 years 5. 0 9.1 - 11 years
6. 2 Over 11 years 7. 12 Zero

8. What is the highest college degree you hold?

1. 0 AA 2. 7 BA 3. 21 BS 4. 9 MA 5. 1 Ed.S
6. 0 Doctorate

9. How many graduate-level reading credits do you hold (semester credits)?

1. 15 Zero 2. 5 1 - 3 credits 3. 6 4 - 6 credits
4. 4 7 - 9 credits 5. 0 10 - 12 credits
6. 6 13 - 15 credits 7. 1 Over 17 credits

10. Do you hold a Reading Specialist Endorsement?

1. 1 Yes 2. 37 No

11. Should special educators who work with LD students also be required to have a Reading Specialist Endorsement?

1. 14 Yes 2. 24 No

12. Should more reading courses be required to obtain a Special Education Credentials? 1. 27 Yes 2. 11 No

13. The LD student can best learn to read through instruction by the (please check only one response):

1. 8 Special Educator
2. 16 Reading Specialist
3. 0 Regular/General Educator
4. 0 English Teacher
5. 0 Bilingual Teacher
6. 14 Team - Approach
7. 0 Parents
8. 0 Adult tutor
9. 0 Peer Tutor

14. Please check the one statement which best describes your philosophical basis for educating LD students:

1. 5 The LD student should meet all standard school requirements in order to advance;

2. 25 modified requirements for school advancement should be allowed the LD;

3. 4 vocational/technical training schools are best for the LD;

4. 3 private/alternative schools can best develop programs for the LD

5. 1 other (please describe)_____

_____

15. Please check the one statement below which best describes your top teaching priority for your LD students:

1. 17 remediate deficit learning processes

2. 4 teach basic academic skills using regular/general class materials;

3. 10 teach academic skill using special education materials;

4. 1 teach pre-vocational/vocational skills;

5. 4 teach real-life/functional survival skills;

6. 2 other (please describe)_____

_____

16. What are your reading program priorities for your LD students (please check only your top three choices)?

1. 29 word recognition 5. 2 reading rate

2. 8 concept development 6. 4 study skills

3. 9 survival reading skills 7. 31 comprehension

4. 17 listening skills 8. 11 word meaning

9. 0 other(please describe)_____

17. What is the basic approach you use to teaching reading to your LD students (please check only one response)?

1. 5 language experience
2. 2 programmed instruction
3. 8 multi-sensory approaches
4. 11 individualized reading
5. 5 phonics
6. 2 linguistics
7. 2 basals
8. 2 sight word methods
9. 0 other (please describe_____

18. What is your basic grouping method when teaching reading to your LD student (please check only one response)?

1. 4 total class instruction
2. 5 ability groups
3. 0 research groups
4. 14 individual instruction
5. 0 interest groups
6. 1 skills groups
7. 14 combination of the above methods
8. 0 other (please describe_____

19. Is the teaching of reading for your LD students mainly your responsibility?

1. 19 Yes 2. 19 No

20. Which of the below statements best describes your function in relation in reading and your LD students (please check only one response)?

1. 18 provide a formal remedial reading program.
2. 3 consultant to the remedial reading teacher.
3. 15 provide direct tutoring for reading skill needs
4. 0 direct peer-tutoring
5. 0 other (please describe)_____

22. If your school has a remedial reading program, how many of your LD students participate in that program? (please indicate the number of students)

    1. 11 no remedial reading program available (please check of appropriate)

    2. 61 number of students in remedial reading program

    3. 463 number of students not in program

23. Do you give reading-interest inventories for your LD students?

    1. 16 Yes 2. 22 No

24. Do you maintain individual checklists of your LD students' strengths and weaknesses in reading?

    1. 23 Yes 2. 15 No

25. Do you give informal reading tests when assessing your LD students?

    1. 32 Yes 2. 6 No

26. Do you give formal reading tests when assessing your LD students?

    1. 30 Yes 2. 8 No

27. If you responded to question #26 with a Yes answer, please check the below reading tests which you use to formally assess your LD students:

    A. General Survey Reading Test

        1. 4 Gates-McGinitie Reading Test

        2. 1 Metropolitan Achievement Test

        3. 0 Nelson Silent Reading Test

        4. 1 SRA Achievement Series: Reading

        5. 22 Wide Range Achievement Test: Reading

        6. 0 Other (Please describe)_____

B. Diagnostic Reading Test Batteries

1. 1 Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty
2. 0 Gates-McKillop Reading Diagnostic Test
3. 18 Peabody Individual Achievement Test: Reading subsections
4. 0 Spache Diagnostic Reading Scales
5. 2 Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery: Reading Subsections
6. 13 Woodcock Reading Mastery Test
7. 11 Other (please describe)_____

C. Diagnostic Reading Tests of Specific Skills

1. 3 Botel Reading Inventory
2. 2 Doren Diagnostic Test of Word Recognition
3. 0 Fry's Phonic Criterion Test
4. 3 Gray Oral Reading Test
5. 0 Other (please describe)_____

28. In your opinion, is your school meeting the reading needs of your LD students?

1. 19 Yes 2. 19 NO

29. Please check any of the below categories of reading materials you use to teach reading to your LD students:

1. 21 Basal Reader Series
2. 27 Series Books (High Interests/Low Vocabulary texts)
3. 19 Reading Kits (i.e.: "NFL Action," "SRA Reading Lab)
4. 16 Reading Workbooks (i.e.: "Boning Mult. Skills")
5. 19 Dictionaries, Encyclopedias Thesaurus
6. 30 Reading Games Commercial and self-made)
7. 24 Audio-visual Aids/ Products
8. 3 Reading Machines (i.e.: "EDL Controlled Reader," "Tachistocope.")
9. 18 Magazines/Newspapers